

Quit You Like Men.

FOR YOUNG MEN
AFTER THEIR CONFIRMATION.

By 'FIDELIS,'

AUTHOR OF

'SIMPLE PREPARATION FOR THE HOLY COMMUNION.'



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QUIT YOU LIKE MEN.

I.

NOW that you have been confirmed, let me ask you this question—

What sort of life do you mean to lead?

Just as it is necessary for a pilot to look ahead and decide which way he shall take, so should you now look ahead and decide which way you mean to take, *what sort of life you mean to lead.* Shall it be

A Worldly Life?

A life devoted to this world ; listening, and only caring to listen, to the Gospel of Getting On ; having no object but 'to get on,' and 'to make money,' and 'to enjoy life.' Shall this be your life?

Surely not ; for such a life is not a Christian life. And what have you just been doing?—openly and solemnly enrolling yourself under Christ's banner to fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil.

It seemed a little thing to say, 'I do.' It

seems a little thing for any young man when the recruiting sergeant takes him before a magistrate and the magistrate asks him if he wishes to enlist in Her Majesty's army to say, 'Yes,' but once said that young man is a soldier. He belongs to the army and is bound to obey its laws. If he runs away after that—it may be only one hour after—he is treated as a deserter.

And you have enlisted in Christ's army. To the question, Do you renew the solemn promise and vow that was made in your name at your baptism? you have answered, 'I do;' I do confirm all that was then said; I do now, in the presence of GOD and of this congregation, renew that promise and vow.

You have said it, and you cannot now retract your words; surely you do not wish to do so? You will not desert Christ now?

Well, then, if you are bound to live as Christ's soldier you cannot live only for yourself and for this world. The Gospel of Getting On is not your Gospel; the worship of Mammon is not for you; you cannot serve two masters.

Of course, to a certain extent you should try to get on and make your way in the world. It is a very necessary and important part of your duty to your neighbour *to learn and labour truly to get your own living*, and to do your duty in that state of life unto which it has pleased GOD to call you, and you will not do it well unless your heart is in your work; but that is

a very different thing from a life devoted entirely to money-making, amusement, and selfishness.

Yours, then, must not be a worldly life. Shall it be

A Half-Hearted Life?

A life sometimes fervently serving Christ, sometimes coldly ignoring Him. Fervent on Sundays and lukewarm in the week. Fervent in prayer and slow in action or in doing anything for Christ. Regular in going to church, and anything but regular in daily prayer and Bible reading. Bold in conversation with good people, and keeping cowardly silence before careless or irreligious companions. Shall this be your life?

Or shall it be

A Pharisee's Life?

A life of shallow, blind religion; paying scrupulous attention to forms, never neglecting prayer or church, and yet in daily life deceitful, sly, dishonest, idle, mean, ungenerous, selfish, unkind, rough: a life in which there is nothing decidedly sinful perhaps but which never rises to anything good. Shall such a mean, despicable life be yours?

Or shall it be

The Manly Christian Life?

The life which makes a man instead of marring him; the life guided and controlled by the religion which enables a man to live a noble, honoured life, in whatever station he may be; to

live a life well pleasing to GOD and approved of men—at least of all men whose opinion is worth having.

I say a *manly* Christian life, for real Christianity both makes a man manly and requires true manliness. A coward cannot follow Christ as He ought to be followed. It requires manly courage and determination, such as few are capable of; it requires a manly spirit of independence, such as few possess.

For think of Christ's *courage* which He calls you to imitate. See Him standing up in the midst of His enemies and boldly speaking the truth, saying '*I am the Son of GOD,*' though He knew that such a statement would cause His death. It requires a brave and manly spirit to be able to speak the truth like that.

And this bold confession of your faith will be required of you.

As you grow up to manhood you will often hear Christianity ridiculed, and its very foundations questioned and denied. Are you then to keep a cowardly silence and so save yourself trouble and annoyance; or, like St. Peter, deny your Lord and say, '*I know Him not!*' perhaps He was not the Son of GOD, very likely He was only a good man, as you say; I dare say the Gospels are all idle tales, as you declare?' No; for if you believe in Christ you are called upon to confess Him before men. 'Every one who shall confess me before men him will I also con-

fess before my Father which is in heaven; but whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.' As He, in the midst of His enemies and threatened with death, spoke out and confessed '*I am the Son of GOD,*' so must you too, when in the midst of His enemies, speak out and confess, '*I for one believe in Christ.*' *

* It may very possibly happen that as you grow up you may yourself be troubled with questions and doubts in your mind which will hinder you from bravely confessing Christ. Let not this be any excuse for keeping silence. Face the questions and doubts, and do not rest, do not allow yourself to rest, until you have thoroughly studied the subject and made up your mind on it. 'How long halt ye between two opinions?' Therefore, if you are ever really troubled with doubts as to the truth of Christianity, write to the Secretary of the Christian Evidence Society, 13 Buckingham Street, Strand, London. State your difficulties, and ask him to give you a list of books on the subject, and study them.

I say '*really* troubled with doubts,' for many only fancy that they doubt, thinking it a sign of intelligence to do so, and despising those who say (and if they have not time to study the subject deeply, are they not wise to say) '*I believe in Christ and the Christian religion because I feel it is true, it comes home to my heart and my sense of right; and I believe also because I know that hundreds and thousands of the best brains as well as the best hearts of this and every age have gone into this subject and been convinced of its truth; and therefore I am not going to let my faith be shaken by a few smart questions which I indeed cannot answer, but which I know could be answered, if they have not been answered already, by those who have searched out the matter and are able to give a reason for the faith that is in them. They are not fools, and I am not a fool to trust their learning. I will stick to the old path until it is proved wrong. I will stick to the old truths until they are proved false.*'

The Lord is gracious, His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endureth from generation to generation.

It requires courage to do this. I say again, a coward cannot follow Christ.

Consider also *His brave determination* in steadfastly setting His face to go to Jerusalem, though He knew that the cross awaited Him there. Are there no occasions when this manly determination is needed by the Christian of the present day? Does not the young man who resolves to serve Christ by teaching a class of boys in a Sunday School; or who goes to church when no one else thinks of doing so; or who refuses to enter some low, bad place of amusement, when all his companions are going in; does not he need 'stedfastly to set his face' in defiance of opposition and ridicule?

Again, think of Christ's *purity*, and say if it was not truly noble. As you go out into life and meet the many temptations which must and will come to you on every side, you will find it no easy matter to keep your body in *soberness, temperance, and chastity*. It is no child's play; it requires a man's whole strength, and the help of GOD, to keep himself pure in thought, and word, and deed.

Think of Christ's *temper* also, how patient and forbearing He was. He never lost His temper in His life.

And which needs most strength of mind—to give way to every passing fit of anger with rough hard words, or to control the ready tongue and keep silence? Which was the most manly con-

duct: that of James and John, who angrily wished to call down fire from heaven to consume the Samaritan village because its gates were shut against them; or that of Jesus, who simply turned away from the inhospitable town and sought elsewhere for shelter for the night? It requires a strong and noble mind to be able to set aside at their proper value all suggestions of 'answering with spirit' and 'punishing people as they deserve.'

Think, too, of Christ's *manners*: His courtesy to all, His gentleness to women and children.

And is not gentleness towards weakness a sign of true manliness? The Christian knight was always courteous and gentle towards women and children, the aged and feeble, the sick, the lame, the blind; the old forms of chivalry of the knights-errant may be unsuited to the nineteenth century, but true chivalry is as much as ever necessary if a man would be really manly.

Christ was truly chivalrous. No one cried to Him and He did not stop to listen and assist. No one asked Him for advice or information and did not receive ready attention. In His kindness and courtesy He could not endure that women who were bringing their children to be blessed should be rudely sent away. In His loving care for others and disregard of Himself He was able, in the face of His own awful sufferings, to notice and feel for the pain of a servant upon whom had been inflicted a com-

paratively trivial wound. How manly He was in all this !

Brave, strong, generous, pure, tender, faithful and true, He served God fearlessly all the days of His life.

Shall His Life be your Life ?

You have just been taking up the cross, are you man enough to follow Christ ?

I say, are you man enough ? for it is easy to be a Christian when every one is on Christ's side, but when no one is on Christ's side then it is that it requires real manliness to be able to confess Him before men.

Many, for instance, can say their prayers alone, who are ashamed, *afraid*, of openly kneeling down to worship God. Does not Daniel's manly conduct shame such faint-hearted cowards ? Would he have feared men's laughter who feared not the lions' mouth ?

It is easy enough too to serve God under the cover of excuses. Many will not own *why* they do this and why they do not do that. They wrap the truth up so that it may escape the world's ridicule, and say they go to church because their mother, or wife, or master, wishes it. But is this manly conduct ? Is this like Jesus Christ ? No, if you would be a real Christian you must acknowledge Christ openly, and not, like Nicodemus, under cover of the night.

O where is the old Christian spirit which feared

not the face of man, no, nor the words of man, or anything that man could do ? The spirit of John Knox, who boldly did what he thought right and never heeded the consequences ; of whom it was said, ' There lies he who never feared the face of man ? ' The spirit of Luther, who, when his friends, fearing for his life, tried to keep him from openly confessing the truth, said, ' Although there were as many devils in the town as there are tiles on the roofs of the houses, yet will I go forward ? '

' In the world's broad field of battle,
In the bivouac of life,
Be not like dumb driven cattle,—
Be a hero in the strife.'

Make up your mind to follow Christ all your life long, come what may ; come—as will most surely come—opposition, ridicule, sneers for being a Christian at all, taunts about setting up to be saint, discouragements of all sorts, failures, falls. Never mind ; quit you like men and face the future bravely. Be a man for Christ ; be a man in Christ. Follow Him who alone is worth following, and fight with Him the good fight of faith.

' The Son of God goes forth to war,
Who follows in His train ? '

II.

IT is one thing to make up your mind, it is another thing to stick to it ; for, remember, this fighting of the good fight will often be hard, dull, trying work.

A young man who had made up his mind to follow Christ was one day very nearly giving way under temptation. He picked up his Prayer-book and read in the Psalms for that day, 'I have stuck unto Thy testimonies ; O Lord, confound me not.' 'And please GOD,' he cried, 'I, too, will *stick to them*.'

So I say to you ; make up your mind to try to live as a Christian man should live, and *stick to it*.

Watch and pray that you may not be overcome by the temptations which must come to you.

WATCH. Keep a sharp watch over your habits of life, for what truth is there in a man's religion if he be not pure and temperate in body, just and true in all his dealings?

Purity and Temperance,
Honesty and Truth :

Let these words ring in your ears, and be the guide, the aim, the test of your daily life.

And PRAY ; for the flesh is weak. Try to get into a few good habits of prayer and of other things. For instance—

Never leave your room in the morning without asking for a blessing on the day.

Never go to bed without kneeling down to pray.

Always insist on reading carefully a few verses of the Bible before going to bed, no matter how tired or sleepy you may be.

Set aside some money for GOD every time you receive any.

Determine to attend church every Sunday, no matter how long or dull the sermon may be.

See that you go to the Holy Communion not once only after your confirmation but once a-month at least, until you grow to love it ; do this for Christ's sake who died for you. You will feel not fit to go, but never mind that ; *go, for Christ bids you go*, and you cannot be wrong in obeying His command. You will feel shy, perhaps, when it happens that you are the only young man who stays in church for the Holy Communion ; but try to overcome this shyness. Surely you are not going to be driven from Christ by shyness ? You will sometimes think, 'Others do not go to the Holy Communion, why should I try to be better than they ?' To their own Master they stand or fall. 'What is that to thee ? follow *thou* me,' says Jesus to you.*

* A Simple Preparation for the Holy Communion, by the same Author, can be had. See last page.

Does your heart already fail you? Do you think that you cannot live this life? 'Cannot' is no word for a Christian; 'I can do all things,' says St. Paul, 'through Christ which strengtheneth me,' and so I say to you, *you can*.

You can, with Christ's help, take these few rules (which are classified in a simple form as follows) *and stick to them*.

1. To WATCH yourself daily with regard to Purity and Temperance, Honesty and Truth.
2. To PRAY { In the Morning, asking a blessing before leaving your room.
daily { At Night, never going to bed without kneeling down to pray.
3. To read some portion of the Bible daily.
4. To set aside some money for GOD every time you receive any.
5. To attend church every Sunday.
6. To go to the Holy Communion once a month *at least*.

'Lord, show me what Thou wouldest have me to do; and then help me to do it.'

DAILY PRAYERS.

I have written the following simple forms of prayer, but *your own words* will always be far the best and most acceptable to God.

MORNING.

If you have not time for longer prayer say—

O GOD, I beseech Thee to bless me this day, and to guide me and help me in everything I do. Keep me pure and sober, honest and true; for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

NIGHT.

O LORD GOD, I thank Thee for all Thy goodness to me. Lord, forgive me all that I have done wrong this day. I have done things that I ought not to have done; and I have left undone things that I ought to have done. Lord, have mercy upon me and forgive me, for Jesus Christ's sake.

O LORD, help me to be more true to Thee, more in earnest, and more anxious to please Thee in my daily life.

O GOD, Thou art my GOD, help me to believe in Thee, to fear Thee, and to love Thee with all my heart. Help me every day to know Thee better and to love Thee more.

O LORD, bless me and keep me this night, and send Thy blessing on for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Our Father, &c.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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